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To whom it may concern:

I am currently the president of the Homes Court Tenant Association. I was introduced to the members of The Greater Newark HUD Tenants Coalition, they have provided me with relevant information to help the Homes Court Tenant Association. The Greater Newark HUD Tenants Coalition, has provided many workshops, training sessions, and meetings to assist individuals and organizations. I have attended these sessions and learned several things provided in the workshops, such as how to obtain legal representation, to gather necessary information regarding my building, and how to present it to the necessary entities. The information on tenant responsibilities, tenants rights, and the right to organize, has helped to make a difference for the better.

When my building did not have lights in the hallways, and no working elevators, we were unable to obtain our mail due to lack of mailboxes. Tenants could only receive their mail on weekdays during the hours of 2pm-4pm and there was no mail distribution on Saturdays. We did not have security for the building which has 120 units and numerous small children. When I was introduced to the members of the Greater Newark HUD Tenants Coalition, they begin to work with me and the tenant association to show us what was needed to get better living conditions. The Greater Newark HUD Tenants Coalition, brought in cameras and video equipment to document the living conditions within the dwellings and to record damages throughout the housing complex.

The Greater Newark HUD Tenants Coalition, was instrumental in getting the Newark Health Department, involved with helping to improve the living conditions of the young children, with the help of still pictures, and video tapes. These young children were exposed to peeling paint, possible lead based paint, and a severe roach and mice infestation. Also, they got the New Jersey Mortgage and Finance, (PAE) to come out and have New Community Corporation officials, perform structural inspections of the complex. The building is less than 25 years old and is dilapidated with structural problems as well as security concerns. The only entity that has stayed and helped us though this has been The Greater Newark HUD Tenants Coalition. Their hands on involvement and daily consulting was the support needed, especially when we as tenants had no one, nor did we have the financial ability to help ourselves. The Greater Newark HUD Tenants Coalition, was there and provided us with the needed services and referrals.

The Greater Newark HUD Tenants Coalition provides the residents of Newark, an organization that understands and sympathizes with the unique problems which may occur. This coalition understands the complicated regulatory structure which tenants must work through. The Greater Newark HUD Tenants Coalition has been a great help to the tenant association of Homes Court, they have truly been a lifesaver for the citizens of Newark and throughout the State of New Jersey. Through the organizing of the tenant associations statewide, and the housing preservation program, the Greater Newark HUD Tenants Coalition takes on the powerful management companies and their owners.

We need to continue to support The Greater Newark HUD Tenants Coalition, and keep their involvement with the individual townships in the State of New Jersey. I emphatically, recommend that the Department of Housing and Urban Development, provide funding to keep The Greater Newark HUD Tenants Coalition functional, and involved in the on going struggle by the tenants within the HUD financed buildings.

Very truly yours,

Phillip W. Grate
President